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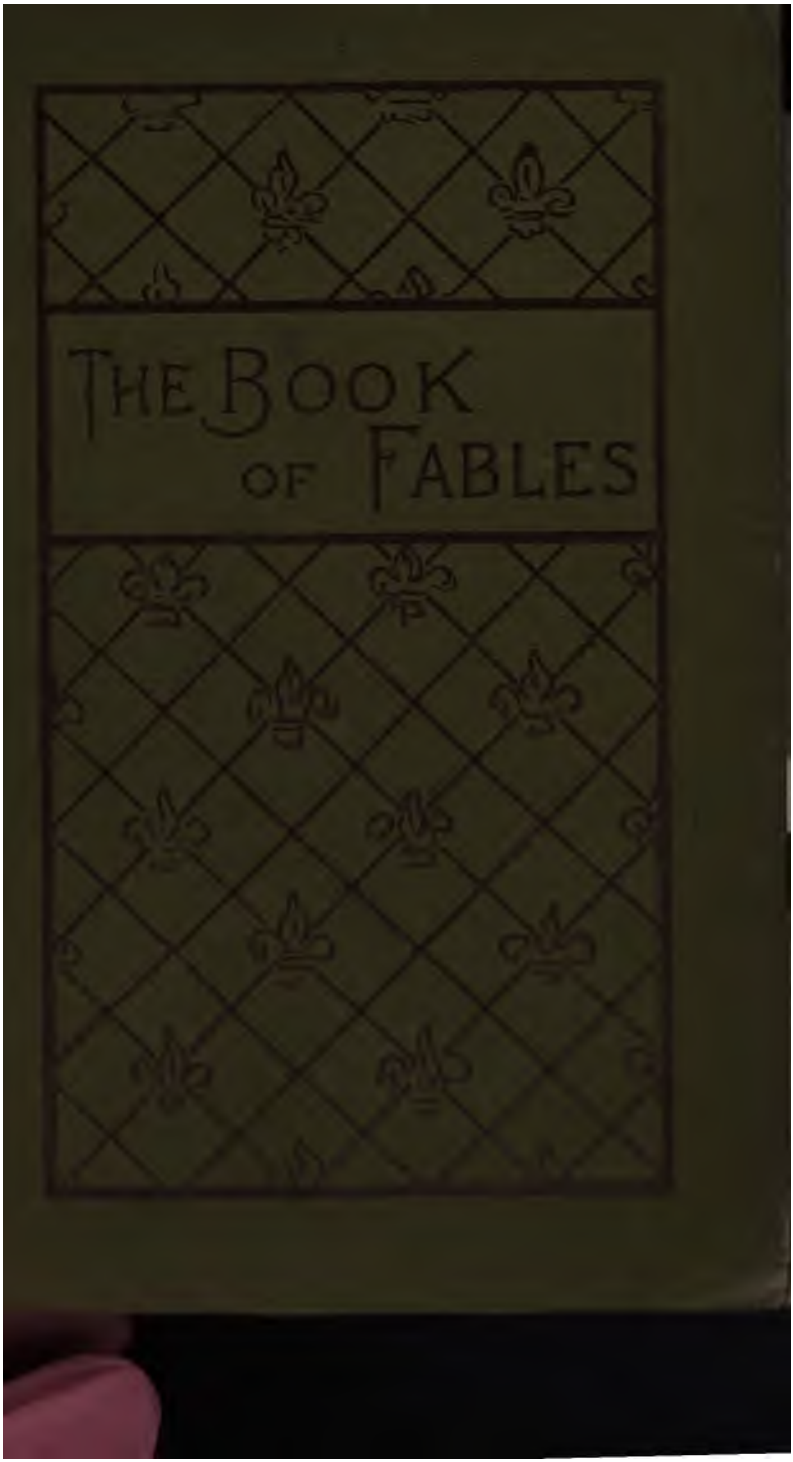
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THE BOOK
OF FABLES

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FROM

H. E. Scudder Esq.,
of Cambridge.

7 Nov, 1885.



THE BOOK OF FABLES

CHIEFLY FROM ÆSOP

CHOSEN AND PHRASED

BY

HORACE E. SCUDDER

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. W. HERRICK



BOSTON
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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PREFACE.

THOSE who have to do with the early education of children are often hard put to find a literature for them which shall seem worth their while when reading has become a comparatively easy task. The first books put into a child's hands are necessarily simple; but the simplicity is below the child's intelligence. During the period when he is mastering the several combinations in which a boy, a rat, and a cat can be placed, and is acquiring the power of reading at sight, he is listening to books which are by no means so barren in their simplicity, and as soon as he is able to read the little stories which he finds in the early readers he leaves them behind; they have served their purpose, and he never recurs to them.

But literature, for the sake of which the art of reading is acquired, is never left behind, and it

becomes of importance to give children, as soon as may be, forms of enduring literature on which they may exercise their newly-acquired power. The simplest, most child-like form is the Fable, and there are good reasons why a book of fables should be the first real book which a child reads.

In the first place, the fable is short. The child has the pleasure of reading an entire story at one sitting. Then it is of animals, and animals are the natural companions of the child. Again, it is interesting and novel; it appeals to his imagination, for it represents the animal as having human properties; and it suggests a plain moral. It is true, the morality of the fable is usually a prudential one, but prudence is a virtue which comes early in the lessons of life. We may rest with confidence in the worth of stories which have been tested by generations and centuries of use.

The child, therefore, who reads the classic fables has begun his acquaintance with permanent literature. He is reading what the world has chosen to remember. He is applying his new power to that which is worth while. He is beginning to receive the impressions which literature has made upon human life, and the early

impressions which he thus receives will never become even consciously faint. That is to say, there never will come a time in his life when the fable may not still give him pleasure; while the time has already come when the reading-book which he read last week can no longer excite his interest or attention. Every one will recognize the important step which a child has taken when he has entered the current of the world's lasting literature.

There is a great mass of fables, for every people has its own; but the intelligent reader of the world's literature, especially that which is familiar to English-speaking people, will easily name a certain number which meet him at many turns in life, — fables which have yielded proverbs and familiar sayings, and have passed into the common currency of intercourse; which appear as allusions in higher literature, and a knowledge of which is assumed by writers. It has been my pleasure to choose these, and collect them as those which every child should know as a matter of course. They are the fables which he will most surely meet when he reads books or hears speakers.

In presenting these fables, however, for chil-

dren's use, I have had another and distinct task, and I have tried to indicate my work by a single word on the title-page. I have chosen these fables, and I have phrased them. That is, I have not felt at liberty to disturb the old stories in any particular. With Halm's collection of Æsop's Fables before me, I have written them out, not in a literal translation from the Greek, nor in a paraphrase. I have simply preserved the exact lines of the story, but have used phrases which would present no extraordinary difficulties to a child. It has not been my purpose to turn the fables into words of one syllable, for such words and the construction which they compel often produce an artificial effect, of greater difficulty to the young reader than the more natural arrangement of words which may happen to have two syllables, or sometimes even three. I have wished to write out the fables in the Greek order of incident, but not in the nearest English order of construction, and I have used the conversational form whenever the original permitted.

By this means I hope I have at once kept close to Æsop, when Æsop's Fables were in the case, and close also to the movements of a child's mind.

In the instance of fables from other sources, I have, in the main, sought to make them conform to the pattern set by Æsop. I have never lost sight of the use of the book as one to be read by a child, rather than to a child, and I should be entirely willing to sacrifice any credit I might have secured for literary form if I have thrown the stories into a form which is simple, clear, intelligible, and interesting to the readers for whom I intend the book.

H. E. S.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS,
June, 1882.

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THE BOOK OF FABLES.

I.

THE FARMER AND HIS SONS.

A Farmer had come to the end of his life, and wished his Sons to go on with the care of the farm. So he called them to him, and said: —

"My Sons, I am about to die, but if you will dig up the vineyard, you will find what is hidden there."

They thought there must be a pot of gold there; so, after their father had died, they took spades and dug up all the soil.

The pot of gold, to be sure, they did not find, but the vineyard was so well dug over that it bore more grapes than ever.

This fable teaches that hard work brings the pot of gold.



II.

THE BOY AND THE WOLF.

A Shepherd Boy, who kept his flock a little way from a village, used to amuse himself thus. He would rush into the village, crying out, "Wolf! Wolf! a Wolf is carrying off my lambs!"

Twice, three times, the men dropped their work and ran to his help, only to be laughed at. At length a Wolf really did come, and the Boy ran crying for help. But everybody thought him at his old joke, and paid no heed. So he lost all his flock.

This fable teaches that people who tell lies are not believed at last when they speak the truth.

III.

THE DOG AND THE WOLF.

A Dog was lying asleep in front of a stable. A Wolf suddenly came upon him, and was about to make a meal of him; but the Dog begged for his life, saying: —

"I am lean and tough now; but wait a little, for my master is going to give a feast, and then I shall have plenty to eat; I shall grow fat, and make a better meal for you."

So the Wolf agreed, and went away. By and by he came back, and found the Dog asleep on the house-top. He called to him to come down now and do as he had agreed. But the Dog answered: —

"Good Wolf, if you ever catch me again asleep in front of the stable, you had better not wait for the feast to come off."

This fable teaches that wise men, when they escape danger, take care afterwards not to run the same risk.



IV.

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER.

On a warm day in summer, an Ant was busy in the field gathering grains of wheat and corn, which he laid up for winter food. A Grasshopper saw him at work, and laughed at him for toiling so hard, when others were at ease.

The Ant said nothing. But afterwards, when winter came, and the ground was hard, the Grasshopper was nearly dead with hunger, and came to the Ant to beg something to eat. Then the Ant said to him: —

"If you had worked when I did, instead of laughing at me, you would not now be in need."

V.

THE BOYS AND THE FROGS.

A company of idle Boys were watching some Frogs by the side of a pond, and as fast as any of the Frogs lifted their heads the Boys would pelt them down again with stones.

"Boys," said one of the Frogs, "you forget that, though this may be fun for you, it is death to us."

VI.

THE CRAB AND HIS MOTHER.

Said his Mother to a Crab: "Why do you walk so crooked, child? Walk straight."

"Mother," said he, "show me the way, and I will try to walk like you." But as long as she could not walk straight, her son laughed at her advice.



VII.

THE CROW AND THE PITCHER

A Crow that was very thirsty found a Pitcher with a little water in it, but the water lay so low that she could not come at it.

She tried first to break the Pitcher, and then to overturn it, but it was both too strong and too heavy for her. She thought at last of a way, for she dropped a great many little pebbles into the water, and thus raised the water until she could reach it.

VIII.

THE STAR-GAZER.

A certain wise man was wont to go out every evening and gaze at the stars. Now his walk took him once outside of the town, and as he was looking with all his eyes into the sky, and did not see where he was going, he fell into a ditch.

He was in a sad plight, and set up a cry. A man who was passing by heard him, and stopped to see what was the matter.

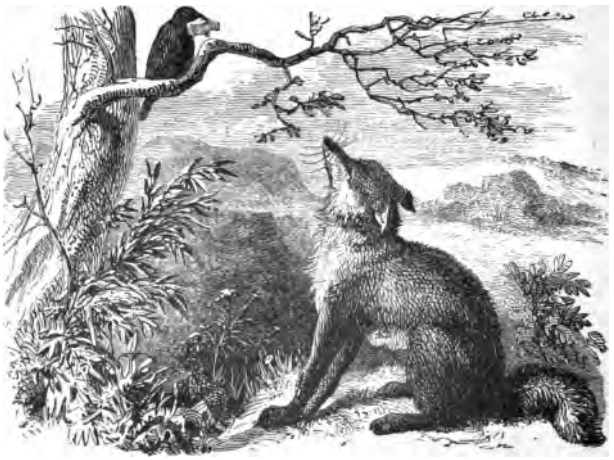
"Ah, sir," said he, "when you are trying to make out what is in the sky, you do not see what is on the earth."

IX.

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN.

The Ass once dressed himself in the Lion's skin, and went about scaring all the little beasts. He met the Fox, and tried to scare him too, but the Fox stopped, and said: —

"Well, to be sure, I should have been scared like the others, if I had not heard you bray and seen your ears stick out."



X.

THE CROW AND THE FOX.

A Crow stole a cheese, and carried it to the top of a high tree to eat it in peace. A Fox saw it, and meant to get it by a trick.

"Good Crow," said he, "what a lovely and shapely body you have! Your color is more beautiful than that of any of the other birds, and if you only had a sweet voice, you would hold the very first place."

At that the Crow opened her mouth to sing, to show him he was wrong, when down

fell the cheese. The Fox picked it up and ran off with it, saying: —

"To be sure, you have a voice, Crow, but you have not any sense."

XI.

A COUNTRY FELLOW AND THE RIVER.

A stupid Boy, who was sent to market by the good old woman, his Mother, to sell butter and cheese, made a stop by the way at a swift river, and laid himself down on the bank there, until it should run out.

About midnight, home he goes to his Mother, with all his market trade back again.

"Why, how now, my Son?" says she. "What have we here?"

"Why, Mother, yonder is a river that has been running all this day, and I stayed till just now, waiting for it to run out; and there it is, running still."

"My Son," says the good woman, "thy head and mine will be laid in the grave many a day before this river has all run by. You will never sell your butter and cheese if you wait for that."



XII.

THE LION AND THE FOX.

A Lion that had grown old, and had no more strength to forage for food, saw that he must get it by cunning. He went into his den and crept into a corner, and made believe that he was very sick.

All the animals about came in to take a look at him, and, as they came, he snapped them up. Now, when a good many beasts had been caught in this way, the Fox, who guessed the trick, came along. He took his

stand a little way from the den, and asked the Lion how he did.

The Lion said he was very sick, and begged him to come into the den to see him.

"So I would," said the Fox, "but I notice that all the footprints point into the den, and there are none that point out."

XIII.

THE WOLF AND THE SHEPHERD.

A Wolf once walked behind a flock of Sheep, and did them no harm. At first, the Shepherd treated him as an enemy, and kept watch against him; but when the Wolf made no sign of hurting the Sheep, the Shepherd began to think he was quite as good as a watch-dog.

So one day, when the Shepherd wished to go to the city, he left the Sheep in the care of this quiet Wolf. That was the chance the Wolf wanted, and he made sad havoc in the flock. When the Shepherd came back and saw the Sheep scattered, he said: —

"It serves me right; for why did I trust Sheep to a Wolf?"



XIV.

THE LION AND THE MOUSE.

As a Lion lay asleep, a Mouse, by chance, ran into his mouth. The Lion shut his teeth together, and would have eaten him up, but the Mouse begged hard to be let out, saying: —

"If you will let me go, I will be forever grateful."

The Lion smiled, and let the Mouse out. Not long after, the Mouse had a chance to repay him, for the Lion was caught by some

hunters, and bound with ropes to a tree. The Mouse heard him roar and groan, and ran and gnawed the ropes, so that the Lion got free.

Then the Mouse said : —

" You laughed at me once, Lion, as if you could get nothing in return for your kindness to me, but now it is you who owe your life to me."

This fable teaches that there may come sudden changes of fortune, when the strong will owe everything to the weak.

XV.

THE FLIES AND THE POT OF HONEY.

A Pot of Honey was upset in the pantry, and the Flies crowded about to eat of it. It was so sticky that they could not get away ; their feet were held fast, so that they could not fly, and they began to choke to death.

" What wretches we are," they cried, " to die just for a moment of pleasure ! "

So it is that greediness is the cause of many evils.



XVI.

THE LION AND THE BEAR.

A Lion and a Bear chanced to fall upon a Fawn at the same time, and they began to fight for it. They fought so fiercely that at length they fell down, entirely worn out and almost dead.

A Fox, passing that way, saw them stretched out, and the Fawn dead between them. He stole in slyly, seized the Fawn, and ran away with it for his own dinner. When they saw this, they could not stir, but they cried out: —

"What wretches we are to take all this trouble for the Fox!"

This fable teaches that when two people fall to fighting for something, a third person is apt to get it.

XVII.

THE FATHER AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

There was a man who had two daughters, and he married one to a Gardener, the other to a Potter. After some time he came to the Gardener's wife, and asked her how she did, and if all went well with her.

"All things go well but one," she said. "We want rain to make the plants grow."

Not long after he came to the Potter's wife, and asked her how she did, and if all went well with her.

"All things go well but one," she said. "We want it to be bright and to have the sun shine all the while, so that the clay may dry."

Then the Father said, "If you want sun and your sister wants rain, how am I going to please you both?"



XVIII.

THE TORTOISE AND THE EAGLE.

A Tortoise, seeing an Eagle in flight, wanted much to fly like him. So she asked him if he would not teach her to fly.

He told her it was impossible; that Tortoises could not fly. All the more did she urge him, so at length the Eagle seized her in his claws, bore her to a great height, and then, letting her go, bade her fly.

She fell like a stone to the earth, and the blow knocked the breath out of her body.

This fable teaches that men who are envious, and refuse to take the advice of those who know more than themselves, are apt to get into trouble.

XIX.

THE JACKDAW AND THE DOVES.

A Jackdaw once looked into a dove-cote, and saw the Doves well fed and cared for; so he went away and daubed himself white, and then went back to make himself one of them. As long as he kept quiet they let him stay, thinking he was a Dove; but as soon as he opened his mouth to speak or sing, they found out who he was, and drove him out of the dove-cote.

He, poor fellow, now went back to the Jackdaws, but they did not know him on account of his white coat, and would not let him join them. And so, for wanting to get into two companies, he missed both.

This fable teaches that it is best for us to be content with our own kind, showing that the greedy not only miss what they seek, but often lose what they have.



XX.

THE HARES AND THE FROGS.

The Hares once got together, and agreed that they led a very hard life; that they were always in a scare. Men chased them, and dogs, and eagles; they had no peace, and it was better to die once for all than to live in a constant fright.

So they all started for a pond, to throw themselves off a rock into the water and end their wretched life.

Now some Frogs were sitting around the

edge of the pond, and heard the noise made by the Hares as they came running. They were so frightened that they all jumped at once into the water.

"Hold on!" cried one of the Hares to his fellows. "Do nothing rash. Do you not see that there are others more scared than we?"

XXI.

BELLING THE CAT.

There was a sly Cat in a house, and the Mice were so plagued with her at every turn that they called a council to advise some way by which they might guard against being caught by her.

"If you will be ruled by me," says one of the Mice, "there 's nothing like hanging a Bell about the Cat's neck, to give warning beforehand when Puss is coming." They all thought that a capital plan.

"Well," says another, "and now we are agreed upon the Bell, say, who shall hang it upon the Cat's neck?" But there was no one ready to bell the Cat.



XXII.

THE STAG AND THE LION.

A thirsty Stag came to a spring to drink; as he drank he looked in the water and saw himself. He was very proud of his horns, when he saw how big they were and what branches they had; but he looked at his feet, and took it hard that they should be so thin and weak.

Now, while he was thinking about these things, a Lion sprang out and began to chase him. The Stag turned and ran, and as he was very fleet he outran the Lion so long

as they were on the open plain; but when they came to a piece of woods, the Stag's horns became caught in the branches of the trees. He could not run, and the Lion came up with him.

As the Lion fell upon him with his claws, the Stag cried out: —

"What a wretch am I! I was made safe by the very parts I scorned, and have come to my end by the parts I gloried in!"

XXIII.

THE HUNTER AND THE WOODCUTTER.

A Hunter was looking for the tracks of a Lion, and he asked a Woodcutter whom he met if he had seen any tracks of a Lion, and if he knew where the Lion was hid. The Woodcutter said: —

"Oh, I can show you the Lion himself."

Then the Hunter was pale with fright, his teeth chattered, and he said: —

"I only want to see his tracks; I don't want to see the Lion."

There are those who are brave with words only, and not with deeds.



XXIV.

THE FARMER'S SONS.

A Farmer's Sons once fell out. The Farmer tried to make peace between them, but though he used many words, he could do nothing. Then he bade them bring him some sticks. These he tied together into a bundle, and gave the bundle in turn to each of his Sons, and told him to break it. Each son tried, but could not.

Then he untied the bundle and gave them each one stick to break; this they did easily,

and he said: "So is it with you, my Sons. If you are all of the same mind, your enemies can do you no harm; but if you quarrel, they will easily get the better of you."

XXV.

THE TRAVELERS AND THE AXE.

Two men were traveling along the same road, when one of them found an Axe. At that the other, who had not found it, begged him not to say "I found the axe," but "We found the axe."

By and by the people who had lost the axe met them, and the one who had found it was set upon by them. As he tried to escape, he cried out: "We are undone!"

But his fellow-traveler answered: —

"Do not say 'We are undone,' but 'I am undone;' for when you found the axe, you said 'I found the axe,' not 'We found the axe.'"

Those who do not share their good fortune with others will find none to share their ill fortune.



XXVI.

THE FARMER AND THE STORK.

A Farmer set a net in his field to catch the Cranes that were eating his grain. He caught the Cranes, and with them a Stork also. The Stork was lame, and begged the Farmer to let him go.

"I am not a Crane," he said. "I am a Stork. I am a very good bird, and take care of my father and mother. Look at the color of my skin; it is not the same as the Crane's."

But the Farmer said: "I do not know

how that is. I caught you with the Cranes, and with the Cranes you must die."

It is well to keep out of the way of wicked people, lest we fall into the trap with them.

XXVII.

THE BOY AND THE NETTLE.

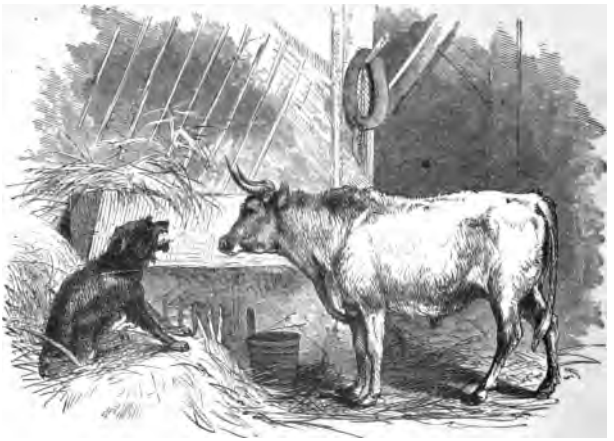
A Boy playing in the fields was stung by a Nettle. He ran home to his mother, and told her that he had but touched the weed, and it had stung him.

"It was just touching it that stung you," said she. "The next time you meddle with a Nettle, grasp it boldly, and it will not hurt you."

XXVIII.

THE TWO PACKS.

Every man carries two Packs, one in front, the other behind, and each is full of faults. But the one in front holds other people's faults, the one behind holds his own. And so it is that men do not see their own faults at all, but see very clearly the faults of others.



XXIX.

THE DOG IN THE MANGER.

A Dog once made his bed in a manger. He did not eat the grain there, and he would not let the Ox eat it, who could.

XXX.

THE BOY WHO STOLE APPLES.

An Old Man found a rude Boy up in one of his trees, stealing apples, and bade him come down. The young rogue told him plainly that he would not.

"Won't you?" said the Old Man. "Then I will fetch you down." So he pulled up some tufts of grass and threw them at him; but this only made the youngster laugh.

"Well, well," said the Old Man. "If neither words nor grass will do, I will try what virtue there is in stones." With that he pelted the Boy heartily with stones, which soon made him clamber down from the tree and beg the Old Man's pardon.

XXXI.

THE KID AND THE WOLF.

A Kid stood on top of a house, and saw a Wolf go by below. Then the Kid began to jeer at the Wolf, and to make all manner of fun of him.

"Oho!" said the Wolf; "it is not you, it is the safe place where you are, that laughs at me."

This fable teaches that the place in which one is, or the time in which he acts, often gives one great boldness toward those who are his betters.



XXXII.

THE MAN AND THE LION.

A Lion was once going along the road with a Man, and each was telling large stories. By and by they came upon the statue, by the road-side, of a man with his hand upon a lion's throat. The Man pointed to it, and said : —

" There ! see how much stronger we are than you ! We are the masters of animals."

But the Lion said quickly : —

" That is the way these things are done by you, but if lions knew how to carve in

stone, you would see the lion there with his paw on the man's neck."

XXXIII.

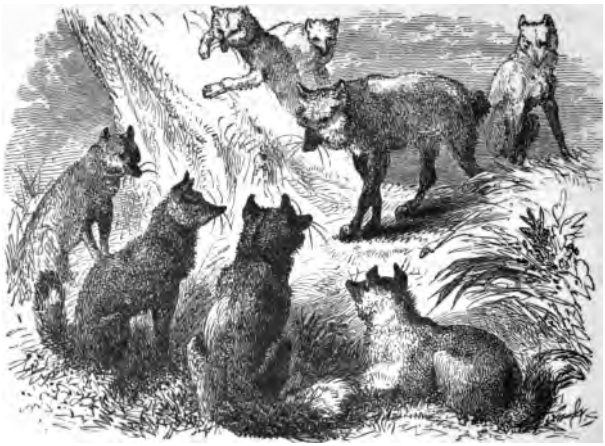
THE CAT, THE MONKEY, AND THE CHESTNUTS.

A Cat and a Monkey were sitting one day by the hearth, watching some chestnuts which their master had laid down to roast. The chestnuts had begun to burst with the heat, and the Monkey said to the Cat: —

"It is plain that your paws were made to pull out those chestnuts. Your paws are, indeed, exactly like our master's hands."

The Cat was greatly flattered by this speech, and reached forward for the tempting chestnuts; but scarcely had she touched the hot ashes than she drew back with a cry, for she had burned her paw. She tried again, and made out to get one chestnut; then she pulled another, and a third, though each time she singed the hair on her paws.

When she could pull no more, she turned, and found that the Monkey had taken this time to crack the chestnuts and eat them.

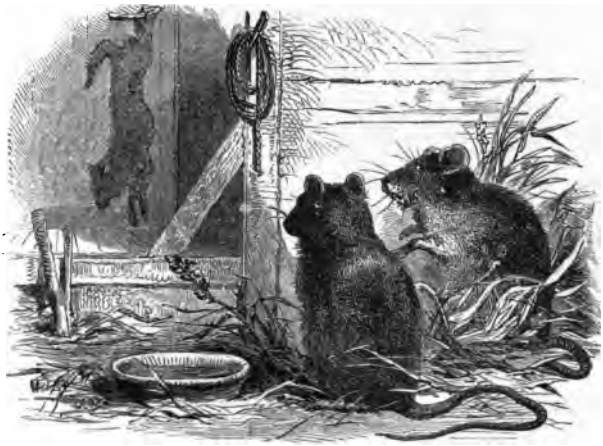


XXXIV.

THE FOX THAT LOST HIS TAIL.

A Fox once got caught in a trap, and lost his tail in getting loose. He was so ashamed that he thought life not worth living. Then he bethought himself and called the rest of the Foxes, and begged them to cut off their tails, telling them that the tail was not only ugly, but a dead weight hung on behind. But one of the Foxes spoke up and said: —

"My good friend, that is all very well, but if it were not to help your case, you never would advise us to cut off our tails."



XXXV.

THE CAT AND THE MICE.

There was a house which was overrun with Mice. A Cat found this out, and went there, and began to catch them. At that the Mice hid for safety in the eaves, and the Cat saw that she must catch them by a trick. She got up on a peg, and holding on by her hind legs, hung down as if she were dead.

One of the Mice peeped out and saw her there; but he said: —

"Ah, you fellow! If you were a bag of meal, we would not come out to you."

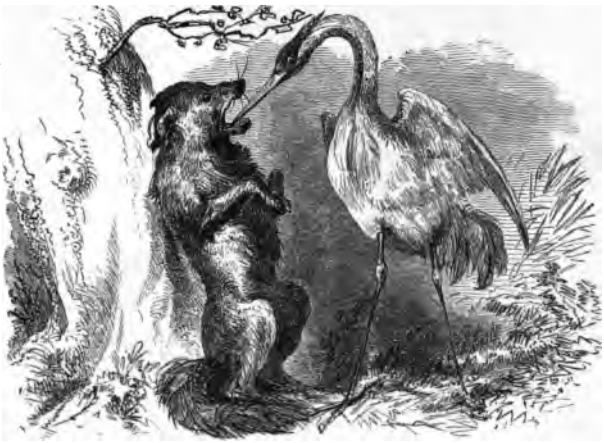


XXXVI.

THE FOX AND THE LION.

A Fox who had never seen a Lion met one by chance, and when he saw him was so afraid that he almost died. When he met him a second time, he was afraid, to be sure, but not as at first. The third time he saw him, the Fox was so bold that he went up to the Lion and spoke to him.

This fable teaches that when we get used to fearful things they do not frighten us so much as at first.



XXXVII.

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE.

A Wolf once had a bone stuck in his throat, and offered to pay the Crane well if she would thrust her head down and draw it out.

When she had done it, she asked for her pay. Then the Wolf laughed, and showed his teeth, and said : —

"Is it not enough for you that you have had your head in a Wolf's mouth, and have drawn it out again safely? What more do you want?"



XXXVIII.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

A Wolf saw a Lamb drinking at a brook, and set about finding some good reason for catching him. So he stood a little higher up the brook, and called out: —

"How dare you muddle the water that I am drinking?"

"How can I," said the Lamb, humbly, "when I drink with the tips of my lips only? And, besides, the water runs from you to me, not from me to you."

"Well, you called my father names a year

ago," said the Wolf, readily finding another reason.

"I was not born a year ago," said the poor Lamb.

"You may make ever so good excuses," said the Wolf, finally: "I shall eat you all the same."

This fable teaches that when one has made up his mind to do wrong he is not stopped by the best of reasons.

XXXIX.

THE TRAVELER AND THE VIPER.

A man, going along the road in winter, saw a Viper stiff with cold; he had pity on him, and took him up, and placed him in his bosom to warm him back into life.

Now the Viper, so long as he was cold, lay quiet; but so soon as he was well warmed, he drove his fangs into the man's breast.

As the man lay dying, he said: —

"I suffer justly; for why should I have taken care of the dying Viper, when I ought to have killed him if he had been in the best of health?"



XL.

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES.

A Fox, who was hungry, found some bunches of grapes upon a vine high up a tree. He longed to get at them, but could not. So he left them hanging there and went off, saying to himself: —

"They are sour grapes."

That is what people sometimes do when they cannot get what they want; they make believe that what they want is good for nothing.



XLI.

THE FOUR BULLS AND THE LION.

Four Bulls once agreed to live together, and they fed in the same pasture. Now the Lion saw them afar off, and wanted to hunt them, but he knew that he could not so long as they held together.

So he managed to set them quarreling with each other, and when that happened, they separated, and he easily mastered them one at a time.



XLII.

THE WIND AND THE SUN.

The Wind and the Sun had a dispute as to which of the two was the stronger; they agreed that the one should be called stronger who should first make a man in the road take off his cloak.

The Wind began to blow great guns, but the man only drew his cloak closer about him to keep out the cold. At length the gust was over.

Then the Sun took his turn. He shone, and it was warm and bright. The man

opened his cloak, threw it back, and at last took it off, and lay down in the shade where it was cool.

So the Sun carried his point against the Wind.

This fable teaches that it is often easier to persuade men than it is to force them.

—•—

XLIII.

THE EAGLE SHOT WITH AN EAGLE'S ARROW.

An Eagle came down out of the sky and lit on a rock, where he meant to watch for a Hare.

Some one saw the Eagle, and drew a bow and shot him. The arrow drove fast into the Eagle, and the feathers on the arrow stood out plainly before his eyes. They were feathers from an Eagle's wing.

The Eagle closed his eyes, and said: —

"Oh, this is worst of all, — to be killed by an arrow with Eagle's feathers."

This fable teaches how sore a thing it is to be in peril from what belongs to one's self.



XLIV.

THE TRAVELERS AND THE BEAR.

Two friends were walking along the road, when a Bear came suddenly upon them.

One of them got first to a tree, and climbed up into it and hid among the branches.

The other, who was slower, fell flat upon the ground, and made believe that he was dead.

When the Bear came up to him, and poked him with his nose, he held his breath;

for it is said that this animal will not touch a dead man. The Bear went off, and the Man who was in the tree came down, and asked the other what the Bear had whispered.

"He told me," said the other, "not to travel hereafter with friends who would desert me when danger came."

This fable teaches that misfortunes sometimes show which of our friends are true friends.

XLV.

THE GNAT AND THE BULL.

A Gnat once lit on a Bull's horn, and stayed there a long while.

When he was about to fly away, he asked the Bull if he would like to have him go now.

"Why," said the Bull, "I did not know you were there."

One might answer thus a perfectly useless man, who was neither harmful nor helpful whether he was present or absent.



XLVI.

THE SPENDTHRIFT AND THE SWALLOW.

A wild young Fellow, who had spent all his father's money, and had only a cloak left upon his back, when he saw a Swallow flying about before it was time, said: "Ah, summer has come! I shall not need my cloak any longer, so I will sell it." But afterwards a storm came, and, when it was past, he saw the poor Swallow dead on the ground. "Ah, my friend!" said he, "you are lost yourself, and you have ruined me."

One Swallow does not make a summer.



XLVII.

THE FOX AND THE STORK.

The Fox invited the Stork to sup with him, and placed a shallow dish on the table. The Stork, with her long bill, could get nothing out of the dish, while the Fox could lap up the food with his tongue; and so the Fox had the laugh on the Stork.

The Stork, in her turn, asked the Fox to dine with her, and she placed the food in a long-necked jar, from which she could easily feed with her bill, while the Fox could get nothing; and that was tit for tat.



XLVIII.

THE COUNTRY MOUSE AND THE TOWN MOUSE.

A Country Mouse had a friend who lived in a house in town. Now the Town Mouse was invited by the Country Mouse to take dinner with him, and out he went, and sat down to a dinner of barley and wheat.

"Do you know, my friend," said he, "that you live a mere ant's life out here? Now, I have plenty at home; come and enjoy the good things there with me."

So the two set off for town, and there the Town Mouse showed the other his beans and meal, his dates, his cheese and fruit and honey. As the Country Mouse ate, drank, and was merry, he praised his friend and bewailed his own poor lot.

But while they were urging each other to eat heartily, a man suddenly opened the door, and, frightened by the noise, they crept into a crack. By and by, when he had gone, they came out and tasted of some dried figs; when in came another person to get something that was in the room, and when they caught sight of him they ran and hid in a hole.

At that the Country Mouse forgot his hunger, and, fetching a sigh, said to the other: —

"Please yourself, my good friend; eat all you want and get rich, — and be in a fright the whole time. As for me, I am a poor fellow, I know, who have only barley and wheat, but I am quite content to live on those, and have nothing to frighten me."

Those who have the plain things of life are often better off than the rich.



XLIX.

THE LION, THE ASS, AND THE FOX.

The Lion, the Ass, and the Fox made a bargain to hunt together. Now, when they had caught a good supply of game, they came to eat it, and the Lion bade the Ass divide the spoils. So the Ass divided it into three equal parts, and called on each to choose his portion. At that the Lion fell into a rage, and made his supper off the Ass.

Then the Lion told the Fox to divide it, and he put almost all the game into one great heap for the Lion, and saved only a

small bit for himself. Then the Lion said: "My good fellow, who taught you to divide so well?" And the Fox said: "That dead Ass there."

L.

THE COUNTRY MAID AND HER MILK-PAIL.

A Country Maid was walking slowly along with a pail of milk upon her head, and thinking thus: "The money for which I shall sell this milk will buy me three hundred eggs. These eggs, allowing for what may prove addled, will produce at least two hundred and fifty chickens. The chickens will be fit to carry to market about Christmas, when poultry always brings a good price, so that by May-day I shall have money enough to buy a new gown. Let me see — green suits me; yes, it shall be green. In this dress I will go to the fair, where all the young fellows will want me for a partner, but I shall refuse every one of them." By this time she was so full of her fancy that she tossed her head proudly, when over went the pail, which she had entirely forgotten, and all the milk was spilled on the ground.



LI.

THE GOOSE THAT LAID GOLDEN EGGS.

There was a man who once had a Goose that always laid golden eggs, one every day in the year.

Now, he thought there must be gold inside of her; so he wrung her neck and laid her open, and found she was exactly like all other geese. He thought to find riches, and lost the little he had.

This fable teaches that one should be content with what he has, and not be greedy.



LII.

THE REEDS AND THE OAK.

The fierce Wind tore up an Oak by its roots, and cast it into the stream. As the Oak floated on the water, it asked the Reeds: —

"How is it that you, who are weak and slender, are not torn up by the roots by this fierce Wind?" And they answered: —

"You fight with the Wind and struggle against it, and so you are rooted up; but we bow before every Wind, and so remain unharmed."



LIII.

THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE.

A Hare once made fun of a Tortoise.

"What a slow way you have!" he said. "How you creep along!"

"Do I?" said the Tortoise. "Try a race with me, and I will beat you."

"You only say that for fun," said the Hare. "But come! I will race with you. Who will mark off the bounds and give the prize?"

"Let us ask the Fox," said the Tortoise.

The Fox was very wise and fair; so he showed them where they were to start, and how far they were to run.

The Tortoise lost no time. She started at once, and jogged straight on.

The Hare knew he could come to the end in two or three jumps; so he lay down and took a nap first. By and by he woke, and then ran fast; but when he came to the end, the Tortoise was already there!

Slow and steady wins the race.

LIV.

THE WOLF AND THE GOAT.

A Wolf saw a Goat feeding upon the edge of a steep rock, where he could not get at her.

"Come down lower," said he; "the grass is much richer here where I am."

"Thank you, good sir," said the Goat; "you are not inviting me to feed myself, but to be food for you."



LV.

THE WOLVES AND THE SHEEP.

The Wolves wanted to get into a sheep-fold, but the Dogs kept them out. So they tried a trick. They sent grave old fellows to the Sheep, who said: "It is the Dogs who make all this trouble between us. Only send them away, and we can live happily together." The Sheep knew no better than to send the Dogs away, and then the Wolves came in and easily made an end of the Sheep.

If you listen to your enemy, you will get yourself into trouble.



LVI.

THE FISHERMAN AND THE SPRAT.

A Fisherman cast his net, and caught a Sprat. The Sprat begged him to let him go this time, for he was small now, but by and by he would grow to be a big fish, and be worth catching. But the Fisherman said: —

"How foolish it would be for me to let go what I have now, because I might, perhaps, get something better by and by!"

This fable teaches that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.



LVII.

THE LION IN LOVE.

A Lion once fell in love with a Woodman's daughter, and wished to marry her. So he went to the father and begged him to give him the maid.

The Woodman said he could not think of marrying his daughter to a Lion. At that the Lion began to roar terribly. The Woodman was in great fright, but thought of a way out of the danger.

"Lion," said he, "I will give you my

daughter if you will first have your nails and your teeth drawn; for it is these that frighten her."

The Lion was so madly in love that he went at once and had his nails and his teeth drawn; but now, when he came back for the maid, the Woodman had no more fear of him, and drove him away with jeers.

LVIII.

THE ARAB AND HIS CAMEL.

One cold night, as an Arab sat in his tent, a Camel gently thrust the flap of the tent aside, and looked in.

"I pray thee, master," he said, "let me but put my head within the tent, for it is cold without."

"By all means, and welcome," said the Arab cheerfully; and the Camel, moving forward, stretched his head into the tent.

"If I might but warm my neck, also," he said, presently.

"Put also your neck inside," said the Arab. Soon the Camel, who had been

turning his head from side to side, said again:—

"It will take but little more room if I place my fore legs within the tent. It is difficult standing without."

"You may also plant your fore legs within," said the Arab, moving a little to make room, for the tent was very small.

"May I not stand wholly within?" asked the Camel, finally. "I keep the tent open by standing as I do."

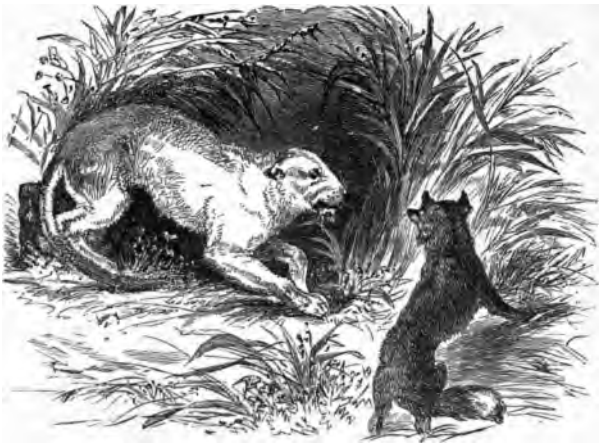
"Yes, yes," said the Arab. "I will have pity on you as well as on myself. Come wholly inside."

So the Camel came forward and crowded into the tent. But the tent was too small for both.

"I think," said the Camel, "that there is not room for both of us here. It will be best for you to stand outside, as you are the smaller; there will then be room enough for me."

And with that he pushed the Arab a little, who made haste to get outside of the tent.

It is a wise rule to resist the beginnings of evil.



LIX.

THE LIONESS AND THE FOX.

A Lioness was twitted by a Fox.

"Hoh!" said he, "you only give birth to one at a time."

"One?" said she. "Yes, one; but a Lion."

This fable teaches that good resides not in numbers, but in worth.



LX.

THE DOG AND HIS IMAGE.

A Dog, with a bit of meat in his mouth, was crossing a river. Looking down he saw his image in the water, and thought it was another dog, with a bigger piece. So he dropped what he had, and jumped into the water after the other piece. Thus he lost both pieces; the one he really had, which he dropped; and the one he wanted, which was no piece at all.

This is a good fable for greedy people.

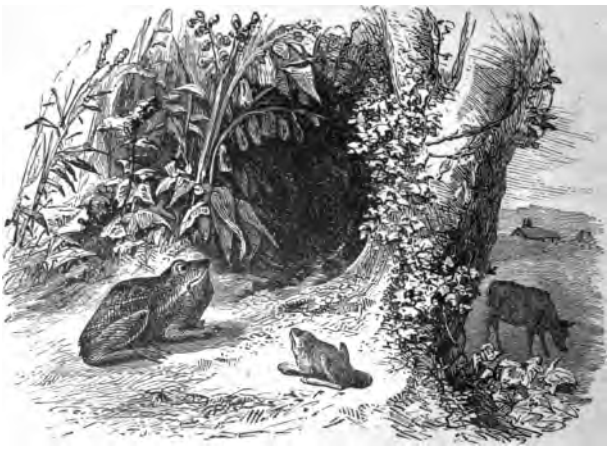


LXI.

THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

A Wolf once clad himself in the skin of a Sheep, and so got in among the flock, where he made way with a good many of them. At last the Shepherd found him out, and hung him upon a tree, as a warning to other wolves.

Some Shepherds going by saw the Wolf hanging, and thought it was a Sheep, and wondered why the Shepherd should hang a Sheep. So they asked him, and he answered: "I hang a Wolf when I catch him, even though he be dressed in a Sheep's clothes."



LXII.

THE FROG AND THE OX.

An Ox, grazing in a swampy meadow, chanced to set his foot among a number of young Frogs, and crushed nearly all to death. One that escaped ran off to his mother with the dreadful news.

"Oh, mother," said he, "it was a beast, such a big, four-footed beast, that did it!"

"Big?" said the old Frog. "How big? Was it as big"—and she puffed herself out—"as big as this?"

"Oh, a great deal bigger than that."

"Well, was it so big?" and she swelled herself out yet more.

"Indeed, mother, but it was; and if you were to burst yourself you would never reach half its size." The old Frog made one more trial, determined to be as big as the Ox, and burst herself indeed.

LXIII.

THE FOX IN THE WELL.

An unlucky Fox dropped into a well, and cried out for help. A Wolf overheard him, and looked down to see what the matter was.

"Ah!" says the Fox, "pray lend a hand, friend, and get me out of this."

"Poor creature," says the Wolf, "how did this come about? How long hast thou been here? Thou must be mighty cold."

"Come, come," says the Fox, "this is no time for pitying and asking questions; get me out of the well first, and I will tell you all about it afterwards."



LXIV.

THE LARK AND HER YOUNG ONES.

There was a brood of young Larks in a field of corn, which was just ripe, and the mother, looking every day for the reapers, left word, whenever she went out in search of food, that her young ones should tell her all the news they heard.

One day, when she was absent, the master came to look at his field. "It is full time," said he, "to call in my neighbors and get my corn reaped." When the old Lark came home, the young ones told their mother

what they had heard, and begged her to move them at once.

"Time enough," said she. "If he trusts to his neighbors, he will have to wait a while yet for his harvest."

Next day, the owner came again, and found the sun hotter, the corn riper, and nothing done.

"There is not an hour to be lost," said he. "We cannot depend upon our neighbors; we must call in our relations." Turning to his son, he said, "Go, call your uncles and cousins, and see that they begin to-morrow."

The young Larks, in great fear, told their mother what the Farmer had said. "If that be all," said she, "do not be frightened, for the relations have harvest-work of their own; but take notice of what you hear next time, and be sure to let me know."

She went abroad the next day, and the owner coming, as before, and finding the grain falling to the ground because it was over ripe, said to his son, "We must wait no longer for our neighbors and friends. Do you go to-night and hire some reapers, and we will set to work ourselves to-morrow."

When the young Larks told their mother this, —

"Then," said she, "it is time for us to be off; for when a man takes up his business himself, instead of leaving it to others, you may be sure that he means to set to work in earnest."

LXV.

THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND THEIR ASS.

A Miller and his Son were driving their Ass to the fair to sell him. They had not gone far, when they met with a troop of girls, returning from the town, talking and laughing.

"Look there!" cried one of them. "Did you ever see such fools, to be trudging along on foot, when they might be riding?" The Miller, when he heard this, bade his Son get on the Ass, and walked along merrily by his side. Soon they came to a group of old men talking gravely.

"There!" said one of them; "that proves what I was saying. What respect is shown to old age in these days? Do you see that

idle young rogue riding, while his father has to walk? Get down, you scapegrace, and let the old man get on!"

Upon this the Son got down from the Ass, and the Miller took his place. They had not gone far when they met a company of women and children.

"Why, you lazy old fellow!" cried several tongues at once. "How can you ride upon the beast, when that poor little lad, there, can hardly keep pace by the side of you?"

So the good-natured Miller took his Son up behind him. They had now almost reached the town.

"Pray, honest friend," said a townsman, "is that Ass your own?"

"Yes," said the Miller.

"I should not have thought so," said the other, "by the way you load him. Why, you two are better able to carry the poor beast than he to carry you."

"Anything to please you," said the Miller. "We can but try." So he and his Son got down from the Ass; then they tied his legs together, and, taking a stout pole, tried to

carry him on their shoulders over a bridge that led to the town.

This was so odd a sight that crowds of people ran out to see it, and to laugh at it. The Ass, not liking to be tied, kicked the cords away, and tumbled off the pole into the water. At this the Miller and his Son hung down their heads, and made their way home again, having learned that by trying to please everybody, they had pleased nobody, and lost the Ass into the bargain.

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